

Is the Unity Church's Teachings Aligned with Traditional Christian Doctrine?

Sixbert SANGWA • June 24, 2024

In today's diverse religious landscape, many movements and denominations have emerged, each with unique teachings and practices. Among them is Unity Church, also known as Unity School of Christianity. While it presents itself as a path to spiritual enlightenment, some Christians argue that its teachings stray significantly from traditional biblical doctrine. This article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Unity Church, its core beliefs, and the concerns raised by critics.

Unity Church was founded in the late 19th century by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore. It arose from the New Thought movement, which emphasizes the power of the mind in shaping reality. Unity Church's teachings revolve around the idea that God is present within every person and that individuals can access divine power through affirmative prayer and positive thinking.

Core Beliefs:

1. **Divine Presence Within:** Unity Church teaches that God is not a distant, transcendent being but rather an indwelling presence within each person. This belief is encapsulated in the idea that everyone has a "divine spark" and is inherently good.
2. **Affirmative Prayer:** Affirmative prayer is a central practice in Unity Church. Unlike traditional Christian prayers, which often involve supplication and seeking God's will, affirmative prayer focuses on declaring positive statements about oneself and one's life. It is believed that by affirming good outcomes, individuals can manifest their desires.
3. **Positive Thinking:** Unity Church places a strong emphasis on the power of positive thinking. This principle suggests that by maintaining a positive mindset, individuals can attract positive experiences and outcomes.
4. **Spiritual Healing:** Unity Church advocates for spiritual healing, suggesting that mental and spiritual alignment can lead to physical well-being. This concept echoes New Thought principles and emphasizes the mind-body connection in achieving health.
5. **Reinterpretation of Scripture:** Unity Church often interprets the Bible metaphorically rather than literally, viewing its stories as symbolic lessons rather than historical accounts. This approach seeks to uncover deeper spiritual truths applicable to personal growth and understanding.
6. **Christ Consciousness:** Unity Church believes in the concept of Christ Consciousness, which implies that Jesus demonstrated a divine potential accessible to all. This teaching suggests that everyone can achieve a Christ-like state of spiritual awareness and power.

Biblical and Theological Concerns

While the principles of Unity Church may seem appealing, particularly in a world where positivity and self-empowerment are highly valued, several concerns have been raised from a biblical perspective.

1. **God's Transcendence:** Traditional Christian doctrine emphasizes God's transcendence—that God is wholly other, distinct from creation, and not confined to the human soul. [Isaiah 55:8-9](#) states, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Unity's teaching of the divine presence within all people can diminish the recognition of God's supreme and separate nature.
2. **Nature of Prayer:** In the Bible, prayer is a means of communication with God, involving adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication (ACTS). Jesus teaches his disciples to pray in [Matthew 6:9-13](#), beginning with "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." This model emphasizes reverence for God's holiness and submission to His will. Affirmative prayer, as practiced in Unity Church, shifts the focus from seeking God's will to asserting one's desires, which can lead to a self-centered spirituality.
3. **Need for Salvation:** Central to Christian faith is the belief in salvation through Jesus Christ. [Romans 3:23-24](#) says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Unity Church's teachings often downplay the concept of sin and the need for redemption, instead focusing on the inherent goodness of humanity. This can obscure the biblical truth that all people need salvation through Christ.
4. **Christ's Unique Role:** Unity Church sees Jesus as a master teacher who demonstrated divine potential, but traditional Christianity views Him as the unique Son of God, whose death and resurrection provide the only path to salvation ([John 14:6, Acts 4:12](#)). Unity's interpretation reduces Jesus to one among many spiritual guides, conflicting with the exclusive claims made by Christ about His role in salvation.
5. **Heaven and Hell:** Unity Church teaches that heaven and hell are states of consciousness rather than actual places. This belief diverges from biblical teachings where Jesus and the apostles describe heaven and hell as real, eternal destinations ([Matthew 13:49-50, 2 Corinthians 5:8-10, Hebrews 9:27](#)).
6. **The Bible:** Unity Church views the Bible as a metaphorical and allegorical text, rather than the infallible Word of God. Traditional Christianity upholds the Bible as divinely inspired and authoritative for faith and practice ([2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12](#)).

Practical Implications and Spiritual Risks

The teachings of Unity Church can be seen as part of a broader trend towards self-help spirituality, which prioritizes personal well-being and empowerment over traditional doctrinal beliefs. While positivity and self-improvement are not inherently wrong, they should not replace the foundational truths of the Christian faith.

- **Self-Centered Spirituality:** The focus on individual divinity and positive thinking can lead to a self-centered spirituality. This approach emphasizes personal empowerment and success, often at the expense of recognizing God's sovereignty and the need for a humble relationship with Him.
- **Undermining the Gospel Message:** By downplaying sin and the need for redemption, Unity Church undermines the core message of the gospel. The Bible teaches that all have sinned and require salvation through Jesus Christ ([Romans 3:23-24](#)). Ignoring this essential truth can lead believers away from the necessity of repentance and faith in Christ.
- **False Assurance:** Unity Church's teachings can provide a false sense of spiritual security. By focusing on the inherent goodness and divine potential within, followers may neglect the need for ongoing spiritual growth, repentance, and reliance on God's grace.
- **Misinterpretation of Scripture:** Viewing the Bible as primarily metaphorical can lead to misinterpretations that stray from orthodox Christian teachings. This approach can result in a selective understanding of scripture, where challenging or convicting passages are ignored or reinterpreted to fit personal beliefs.

Paul warned the early church about deviating from the gospel message in [Galatians 1:6-9](#):

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!"

Historical Context and Growth

Unity Church has grown significantly since its founding in the late 1800s. It has established various ministries, including Unity Village, which serves as its headquarters and a center for spiritual education. Unity's teachings have influenced many through publications, radio broadcasts, and online resources.

Despite its growth and appeal, Unity Church's teachings continue to be a subject of controversy within the broader Christian community. Its divergence from traditional Christian doctrine and embrace of New Thought principles place it at odds with mainstream Christianity.

Conclusion

In our quest for spiritual fulfillment, it is crucial to adhere to the truths revealed in Scripture. While the teachings of Unity Church may seem attractive in their emphasis on personal empowerment, they can divert believers from the core tenets of Christianity. As followers of Christ, we are called to seek a deeper understanding of God's nature, engage in prayer that aligns with His will, and acknowledge our need for salvation through Jesus. Let us remain steadfast in our faith, guided by the timeless truths of the Bible.

"Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." ([Matthew 24:4-5](#))

By staying rooted in biblical doctrine, we can safeguard our faith against teachings that may lead us astray.

Related Articles

- [Is Scientology a Legitimate Religious Movement?](#)
- [Is Oneness Pentecostalism a Departure from Biblical Orthodoxy?](#)
- [Who is the Jesus of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints \(Mormons\) ?](#)
- [Who are Branhamites and How Do Their Doctrines Stand in Contradiction to the Bible?](#)
- [What Is Christian Science and How Do Its Teachings Diverge from Traditional Christianity?](#)
- [What False Doctrine Distinguishes Seventh-day Adventists from Christian Denominations?](#)
- [Are Jehovah's Witnesses Saved? Are They Christians? Is It Okay to Join Them If You Are a Christian?](#)

Further Resources

- Explore Online Ministry Opportunities at [Open Christian Ministries \(USA\)](#)
- Explore Christian Business Services at the [Center for Faith and Work \(Rwanda\)](#)
- Pursue an Affordable Online Christian Degree at [Open Christian University \(USA\)](#)
- Kindly Share Your Question for Consideration in Future Articles. [Click Here to Submit](#)

← Back to blog

Comments (0)

[Post Comment](#)